the residential accommodation. However, no payment has been received till date.

(e) Question does not arise.

Operation "SARP VINASH" in J&K

1035. SHRI SHANKAR ROY CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central Intelligence agencies provided adequate, accuarate, and timely information about the existence of militant bases in the Hill Kaka region of Jammu and Kashmir;

(b) whether there was inordinate delay in acting on the information so provided to launch operation for clearance of the areas (Operation Sarp Vinash); and

(c) whether it is a fact that large number of militants have dispersed from the Hill Kaka region to establish similar bases in other areas of Jammu and Kashmir, especially Doda-Kishtwar?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) The intelligence agencies had provided timely and adequate information regarding frequent use of remote areas like Hilkaka region of Jammu and Kashmir by the terrorists as transmit points and establishing hideouts and cashes for weapons and stores. Based on these inputs, a number of counter insurgency operations were carried out in this area. The recent counter insurgency operation in the area named 'Operation Sarp Vinash' was one such operation but of a larger magnitude.

(c) There are no intelligence inputs to confirm this aspect.

MiG-21 Crash in Barmer District Rajasthan

1036. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a MiG-21 aircraft of Indian Air Force crashed in Barmer District of Rajasthan on 4th June, 2003 killing its sole pilot;

(b) whether an enquiry has been ordered into this crash;

(c) when the report of enquiry is expected; and

(d) steps being taken to minimize such air crashes in future?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The inquiry report in likely to be finalised by August, 2003.

(d) A continuous and multi-faceted efforts is always afoot in Indian Air Force to enhance and upgrade flight safety. Measures to enhance the quality of training to improve the skill levels, ability to exercise sound judgment and situational awareness of pilots are being pursued.

Constant interaction with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) of concerned countries are also maintained to overcome the technical defects of aricraft.

MiG-21 Crashes

1037. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether yet another MiG-21 aircraft crashed in first week of June, 2003 near Barmer in Rajasthan;

(b) the number of such aircraft crashed and pilots killed in current calendar year;

(c) the causes of these crashes;

(d) whether Government is thinking of phasing out these aircrafts; and

(e) if so, how long it will take?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Three MiG-21 aircraft crashed and three pilots were killed.

(c) Courts of Inquiry have been set up to ascertain the causes and are still in progress.